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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, December 10, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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The first item to have our attention today is what you might call a "scorching question." A listener writes us that she finished a pretty little hand-made towel for a Christmas gift the other day and then made the mistake of pressing it with too hot an iron. So she has a scorch right in the center. And she'd like to know what she can do about that.

Well, that all depends on how serious the scorch is. Some scorches come out easily just by washing in soap and water. They are the light, surface burns. Others are really deep burns in the fabric and are usually hopeless. Whether the scorch will come out or not depends on how deeply the fabric is burned and also on the kind and color of the cloth. Light scorches on linen or cotton usually wash right out with soap and water. No trouble at all.

So suppose you try a soap-and-water bath on that towel. Maybe the brown spot will just fade away. If washing doesn't do the business, your next best move is to bleach the spot. On a white towel, bleaching isn't much of a problem. Sunshine -- nature's free bleach, is the best and safest and also the most effective. Sunshine is a tried and true remedy for scorches on white fabrics. You wet the brown spot. Then you stretch the cloth right out in the sun's glare -- the brighter the better. And you moisten the spot from time to time. Keep the towel there a day or two if necessary until the stain disappears. I mention dampening the spot because the sun's bleaching action on a scorch is more rapid always if the cloth is moist.

Now if you live in a cloudy climate and have to bleach indoors, use either hydrogen peroxide or some chlorine preparation like Javelle water. Though in general, hydrogen peroxide is the bleach especially for silks and wools, it also works very successfully often on white linens and cottons. But whatever bleach you use, be careful not to use it too strong and not to leave it on too long. And be sure to wash it all out thoroughly before you dry and iron the cloth. It's just as dangerous to be absent-minded or careless about applying a bleach as it is about using a hot iron.

Bleaching will do well enough for the light scorch where the burn has only touched the surface of the fabric. But where the heat has gone deep, has actually burned the fibers of the cloth, the case is hopeless. You may be able to turn that spot white again with your bleach. But the burn will cause the cloth to fall to pieces in a short time.

Question Number 2 is also about a Christmas present. A listener wants advice on making a winter playsuit for a young nephew aged four. She wants to know how to choose a material that will keep out the snow and the north wind.

. Well, the clothing people at the Bureau of Home Economics say that the ideal fabric for this purpose is warm, light-weight, soft, pliable, moisture-proof and closely woven or closely knitted. That's quite a list of qualifications, isn't it? Let's see -- warm, light-weight, soft, pliable, moisture-proof and closely woven. Very few fabrics measure up to all these requirements but many answer the purpose very well. You can buy soft, closely woven, fuzzy fabrics nowadays and these are warmer and much more comfortable than harsh, smooth, leathery fabrics. You can also buy cloth that is so tightly woven that it sheds moisture, and cloth that is treated on the surface with some finish that will turn off water and slushy snow. I'm not speaking of rubberized fabrics. Loosely woven or loosely knitted materials are all right for a mild climate. But they let too much wind through to be comfortable on real wintry days.

Perhaps you have seen the exhibit of children's clothes from the Bureau of Home Economics. If you have, you'll remember the comfortable, convenient, little one-piece play suits for both small boys and girls. These suits are of firm cotton suede cloth, napped slightly inside as well as outside. One suit is of shower or windpreof cotton. It has a finish that sheds water and turns off the wind, but it is not rubberized so does not cause the child to perspire.

Now to answer the home candy maker who says she wants a good recipe for pralines (prah-leens). This rich brown confection of nuts and sugar and cream is a favorite in New Orleans. And that's not a surprise since it was originally an old French candy. Probably the French settlers in the South brought the recipe and were the first ones to make it in this country.

Well, the best recipe I know for pralines calls for 4 ingredients: 4 cups of sugar ..... 1 teaspoon of salt ..... 2 cups of cream ..... 3 cups of pecan nut meats. Once more: 4 cups of sugar ..... 1 teaspoon of salt ..... 2 cups of cream ..... 3 cups of pecan nut meats.

Measure out 3 cups of the sugar, add the salt and the cream, and make a sirup. Now melt the other cup of sugar slowly in a heavy frying pan and stir constantly until it caramelizes. Into it pour all the sirup at one time and stir constantly and rapidly. Boil the mixture without stirring to a temperature of 238 degrees Fahrenheit -- or to the "soft-ball" stage. Now pour into a flat pan and cool. Beat until it begins to be creamy. Then add the nuts. Drop by spoonsful onto waxed paper to form flat, round cakes.

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